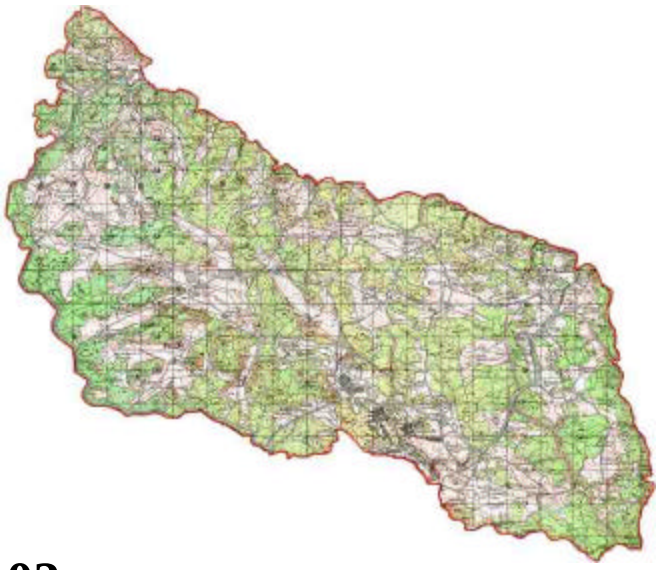
Combat Maneuver Training Center

News from the "Box"



APR - JUN 02 **Issue 2**

FOREWORD

The Combat Maneuver Training Center's News from the "Box" is a new format designed to provide USAREUR Brigade and Battalion Commanders with information that will assist them in preparing and fighting their units during rotations at CMTC. These articles highlight critical areas where we see negative trends developing. My intent is to provide you with Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) that CMTC's senior Observer Controllers (OCs) feel will help reverse these trends for your units.

Combat Trains Battle Tracking. The Combat Trains Command Post (CTCP) is the alternate TOC for each Task Force and must always be prepared to assume the battle; therefore it is essential to standardize the method of battle tracking. There are numerous techniques and methods that effectively maintain situational awareness for the commander and his staff. Through the setup of an efficient battle tracking system, the CTCP allows the commander to provide a key contribution to a successful mission.

Indirect Fires. Effective use of indirect fires is a primary challenge for every commander. By incorporating mortars and FASCAM into your fire support plan, understanding your enemy and the terrain and knowing how to use it to your advantage, and finally, conducting a thorough fire support rehearsal with all key personnel, your unit will increase the lethality of indirect fires during your next rotation at CMTC.

TOC Operations. Tactical Operation Centers are the nucleus and conduit through which the TF commander controls the actions of the TF. Many units do not have TOC layouts that support the different phases of the mission. Typically, a TF TOC may have three basic configurations (green, amber, red). Units with only one TOC configuration often find it hard to displace the CP prior to and during the execution phase. A well-organized TOC, with configurations that support the planning and execution process, is the key to success at CMTC.

I strongly urge commanders to take a few minutes, read these articles and relate them to your units. Sustain your strong points and concentrate your training efforts on those weaknesses that you recognize from these articles. Your goal is to be combat ready. CMTC's mission is to help you attain that goal.

Train to win!

Original Signed (xx JUN 02)
GREGORY A. STONE
COL, AR
Commanding

Battle Tracking in the Combat Trains Command Post

By CPT Matthew J. Cody, Warhog 08
Observer/Controller, CMTC

The trend at CMTC continues to be the same-- units fail to properly track the battle, resulting in decreased situational awareness, failure to requisition combat power, and diminished command and control for the forward logistics fight. The task force (TF) does not properly requisition combat vehicles, personnel, and critical classes of supply due to the flawed battle tracking process. The trend can be reversed, however, by simplifying the battle tracking methodology, implementing the change, and training the process at home station prior to deploying to CMTC… Sounds simple. However, the greatest problem units encounter is standardizing the format, training the tracking system, and validating the system early in the CMTC train-up cycle. Although this article focuses on the combat trains command post, (CTCP), the principles also apply to each command post in the task force, such as the field trains command post (FTCP). Since the CTCP is the alternate tactical operations center (TOC), the tracking system should mirror the system in the TOC and be approved by the TF XO (Reference ***CALL Newsletter No. 99-6,* Jul 99*, CTC CSS: The Tail Talks***).

KEYS TO SUCCESS

The key to successful battle tracking remains twofold. **First**, standardization across the command posts within the task force aids in the effort to achieve a common relevant picture for the commander and staff to make an informed decision. At a minimum, the CTCP should track the tactical situation (combat power, friendly/enemy situation, NBC situation, mine locations); CSS status, which includes logistics status (also called the yellow-1 report), personnel status (or red-1 report), and critical classes of supply (III, IV, and V); CSS unit locations; and also the concept of support (maps with graphic control measures, logistical package (LOGPAC) information, and orders products). **Second**, training the system is necessary, starting from the reporting process to the delivery of resupply over the next 24, 48, and 72 hour periods. The different command and control nodes must buy into the system and train on it often in order to build confidence and streamline the process.

The cycle of information flow in the CTCP can be broken down into five different components in sequential order. They are reporting (logistics reports per SOP), capturing critical information on the standardized tracking chart(s), analysis of the information, forecasting of supplies (24, 48, 72 hours), and the packaging/delivery of the resupply (via LOGPAC and/or emergency resupply).

I. REPORTING

The unit's ability to report both tactical and logistical information is the catalyst that initiates the battle tracking process within the command post (in this case, the CTCP). The different types of reports derived in the unit SOP are the formats that capture and deliver the bulk of the information to the CTCP. Communications is therefore a critical factor that drives the positioning of the CTCP on the battlefield. (Reference ***CALL Newsletter 96-6***).

The important element in the reporting process is a simple report which is clear, concise, and to the point. All too often, our subordinate units that are inexperienced at reporting have not trained the format, which creates confusion and congests the administrative/logistics (A/L) net. In order to streamline the process, companies must reduce transmission times on the A/L net by using the color code system (Green / Amber / Red / Black) and using report formats that focus on critical information such as vehicle/casualty location, casualties by type, and vehicle damage by type (Reference ***CALL Newsletter 96-6***). The techniques that work best under the arduous conditions of CMTC are reports that combine both the crew and vehicle status in one report transmission. Regardless of the SOP, the unit must train on reporting at each and every opportunity including command maintenance (motor stables), field training exercises, and simulation exercises. RTOs from the logistical command posts

(CTCP/FTCP) should train with the TF TOC personnel during training exercises and simulations. There is no substitute for repetitive training and rehearsals in order to increase efficiency.

II. CAPTURING THE INFORMATION

The second component of information flow is the capturing of the important data and in my assessment, the most critical part of the process. Even inaccurate reporting contains valuable information and a consolidated system to capture that information can still maintain the cycle of information flow. The TF current disposition chart (see figure 1, *Task Force Disposition Chart*) conveys a proven method for consolidated battle tracking at the TF level. This is only an example. However, it provides a simplified format that drives several critical requirements including combat power/slant (which drives recovery and maintenance collection), unit locations, and the status of CL III, CL IV and CL V. The format can be modified to accept increased logistics information (e.g., the FTCP which tracks all classes of supply), or strictly to track the fight and the critical supplies (TOC and CTCP). Furthermore, a logistical timeline (see Figure 2, *Task Force CSS Timeline*) should be established to track significant logistical events coupled to TF events and enemy activities. These significant logistical activities include but are not limited to CSS/CASEVAC rehearsals, LOGSTAT turn in, LOGPAC / LRP (arrival and departure) times, CL IX delivery, 5988-E turn-in, maintenance meetings, disk drop or "FM blast" of part requisitions to the FSB, etc. Each command post, including the TF TOC, must have visibility on these significant actions. A soldier should be able to walk into the CTCP or FTCP and update the timeline or prompt subordinate units for information.

TASK FORCE CURRENT DISPOSITION AS OF: 02MAY02

UNIT	TASK ORG AR/IN	LOCATION / MISSION / PERSONNEL (OFF/NCO/EM)	SLANT FMC M1/M2/RS	MAINT DOWN	MILES DOWN	ATTACHMENTS	COMMENTS	REPORTS: GREEN 1 EVERY 4 HOURS	REPORTS: GREEN 2 HOURLY	REPORTS: GREEN 3 0600 1700	REPORTS: 5988-E	STATUS: Green >80% Amber >70% Red <50% Black <30% — PERS	CL III	CL V	WPNS
A CO/TM CALLSIGN: APACHE	2 / 1	QV115602 SCREEN 5 0 57	10/3/0	A32: ENG	A11:BELT	2/B 1-31 ADA	CONDUCTING C/R OPERATIONS	1200 GREEN	1400 GREEN	0500 GREEN	T/I LRP	G	A	G	G
__CO/TM CALLSIGN:	/		/ /									G A R B	G A R B	G A R B	G A R B
__CO/TM CALLSIGN:	/		/ /									G A R B	G A R B	G A R B	G A R B
__CO/TM CALLSIGN:	/		/ /									G A R B	G A R B	G A R B	G A R B
SCOUTS			/												
MORTARS			/ /												

COMBAT SUPPORT	CALL SIGN	PERSONNEL	SLANT	MAINT DOWN	MILES DOWN	VEHICLES	COMMENTS	REPORTS	STATUS (G, A, R, B)
HQ			/ /						
FIST			/ /						
ADA			/ /						
EN									
ACE / AVLM MICLIC / M113			/						
MAINT			/ /						
MEDIC									
TRAINS									

TF TOC	FA TOC	BDE TOC	CBT TRAINS	UMCP
TF TAC	EN TOC	BSA	FIELD TRAINS	LRP SITE

CHALLENGE/PASSWORD: **BATTLE CPT:** **NCOIC:**

Fig. 1
(Task Force Disposition Chart)

CTCP TIMELINE

DTG	TF LOG	TF CMD	BDE LOG	ENEMY	STATUS
180500	STAND-TO		DELIVER CLIV		
180600					
180700	ESP EST				
180800					
180900			CL III BULK EST		
181000		MDMP	CLV/ASP EST		
181100					
181200					
181300					
181430-	LRP				
181500	5988-E T/I + LOGSTAT				
181600	T/I CLIV AND V				
181700					
181800	LOGPAC RTNS		BDE MAINT MTG		
181900	CLIX SCRUB				
182000	MAINT MTG				
182200		OPORD PRODUCTION		IRP LD PL CHERRY	
182300					
190500	STAND-TO	ISSUE TF OPORD			
190600				ERP LD PL CHERRY	
190700	CCP EST	CONF BRIEF			
190800					
190930	L/U WITH CLIV				
191000			BDE CSS REH		
191100	A CO CSS REH				
191200	B CO CSS REH	CONS GRAPHICS DUE			
191300	C CO CSS REH				
191430-	LRP				
191500	5988-E T/I + LOGSTAT				
191600		TF CAR			
191700	TF CSS REH				
191800	LOGPAC RTNS	TF FIRES REH	BDE MAINT MTG	DISMT LD PL CHERRY	
192000				BDE RECON LD CHERRY	
200300		C/R COLLAPSE			
200330		RPOL			
200500		OCCUPY ALT HIDE		CRP LD CHERRY	
200700		NLT DEFEND		FD/FG/1ST ECH LD	

WARHOGS

Fig. 2 (Task Force CSS Timeline)

III. ANALYZING THE INFORMATION

The third component is the refinement and analysis of the information. Simply put, determining what information is important, and what information can hit the editing room floor. This is where the S1 and/or S4 step into the picture. As the commander of the combat trains, it is the responsibility of the S4 (with the assistance of the S1) to allocate assets for the current fight, while simultaneously leaning forward for the next anticipated mission. Based on the information tracked to that point in time, the S4 must assess the tactical situation in conjunction with the requirement and priority for resupply. Although the MDMP process identified the initial allocation of support assets on the battlefield (MAS/FAS, MCPs, and CL III / V resupply), the tactical situation and complexity of the modern battlefield negates most plans on contact. It then becomes a rapid assessment to divert CL III and V in support of the new main effort, send recovery assets to the unit out of immediate contact, and reposition the MAS and/or FAS to a suitable location on the battlefield in support of CASEVAC operations. The S4 must focus on the current fight and ensure that treatment teams, emergency resupply, and recovery assets are positioned to support the TF (Reference ***CALL Newsletter 99-6***). These decisions and many others are driven by the rapid assimilation and assessment of critical data via the consolidated tracking format.

IV. LEANING FORWARD-- FORECASTING SUPPLIES

The fourth component is the forecasting of critical supplies (primarily III, V, VII) and personnel. The S4 normally retains control of the resupply package forward in the combat trains. Based on the situation in the current fight, the S4 must initiate coordination with the FTCP to start preparing another push of supplies forward to the fight. This also marks the transition to the post-battle phase of the operation when units consolidate and reorganize. Depending on the status, this may be immediate resupply of fuel and ammunition, or a scheduled delivery (via LOGPAC) to the units in order to sustain current unit basic loads (UBLs). Accuracy is not as important as rapid assessment and requisition to the field trains. The support personnel in the trains can refine the request and evaluate the numbers. The S4 doesn't have the luxury of time in a fluid battle to crunch numbers and conduct logistics estimates. Additionally, the CTCP is tracking personnel and combat power as systems that are destroyed and casualties inflicted on the unit. This information is subsequently reported to the FTCP in greater detail (including battle roster numbers) during consolidation and reorganization.

V. DELIVERING THE SUPPLIES (EMERGENCY RESUPPLY AND LOGPAC)

The last element of the battle tracking cycle is the packaging and delivery of supplies and personnel in either an emergency push forward or during a scheduled delivery in the form of a LOGPAC. The LOGSTAT is a critical report that accompanies the units at the LRP meeting and relays the on-hand quantities for the next 24, 48, and 72 hours. Additionally, the personnel replacement process must be closely tracked by the S1 as personnel replacements arrive with LOGPAC. The LOGSTAT exchange should be a hard copy, preferably in a notebook format. The 1SG or designated representative turns in the 'dirty' LOGSTAT filled out to the S4 representative, and in turn, receives the clean LOGSTAT book for the next LOGPAC. Any adjustments can be made via FM on the A/L net. Finally, requisition cards (2765-1s) must be processed in order to ensure the proper combat systems are delivered to the units. This closes the loop on the info lifecycle, and drives the planning process and LOG estimate for the next mission.

SUMMARY

The battle tracking process and flow of information is an evolving process. The intent of this article was not to provide the only method for battle tracking. It was, however, an effort to provide an explanation for the flow of information within the CSS arena in order to better understand the key information that requires tracking. Furthermore, it also provides TTPs for tracking the vital information discussed throughout the article. There are numerous tracking techniques that are

effective. However, the main problem with battle tracking remains inexperience, a lack of standardization, and a deficiency in training. Remember, the CTCP is the alternate TOC for the task force and must always be prepared to assume the fight. The key to effective battle tracking is to train whatever system you select early in the train-up process in preparation for deployment to the CMTC. The system can always be modified and will undergo a series of adjustments during training, but at least there is a system in place that is understood by all. Through efficient battle tracking, the CTCP allows the commander to see himself and subsequently provide a key contribution to mission accomplishment.

TRAIN THE TRACKING PROCESS AND WIN THE LOGISTICS FIGHT!!!

REFERENCES

CTC CSS: The Tail Talks, CALL Newsletter 99-6, (Task Force-Level CSS Planning) TRADOC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, July 99.

So You Say You Want to Kill with Indirect Fires…

By MAJ John A. O'Grady, Vampire 07T
Senior Fire Support Analyst, CMTC

Somewhere in Vilslakia: It has been another long day in " the box" at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), and an even longer one at the after action review; the senior observer/controller just finished asking you, "So, commander, how is your unit going to be more lethal next time with indirect fires?" As you are driving back to your tactical operations center (TOC) to start another military decision-making process (MDMP), that one nagging question is the only thing keeping you awake – like a strong cup of coffee brewed by the crew at the TOC. You are determined to fix the problem but you just aren't sure how.

Observer/Controllers on the Fire Support Team have witnessed this phenomenon battle after battle and rotation after rotation. Offered here are techniques that potentially allow you to have a greater opportunity at being more successful with indirect fires in your unit. If nothing else, this article will serve as a primer for the first meeting of fire support coordinators/officers (FSCOORD/FSOs) with their supported maneuver commanders.

TARGET = RESOURCE PLACE HOLDER: Many fire supporters do not understand this simple concept. The moment you place a target on that clear overlay in your TOC, you have allocated resources. Some resources you own, some you share, and some you do not own at all. Nonetheless, in order for that target to achieve the desired effects, you will have to properly allocate resources. To name a few:

- Class V (mortar, field artillery, fixed and rotary wing close air support (CAS) are the most common).
- Battlefield calculus (time and space) that I will address in greater detail.
- Observers, both primary and alternate. Some will be FSOs, but many will be maneuver shooters. You must have redundant observers for essential fire support tasks (EFSTs).
- Communications infrastructure to support observers' call for fire. What nets, when, how? Retrans for fires net.

So next time your target overlay has targets all over it and you have subordinate commanders adding more at the combined arms rehearsal (CAR), ask yourself, "can we possibly resource all these targets given the available limited assets and the competing demands placed on them?" The honest answer will probably yield a response that causes you to go back and make some tough decisions.

EFSTs: An *EFST* is defined by *FM 3-09.31 (6-71) Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Fire Support for the Combined Arms Commander* as "a task for fire support to accomplish that is required to support a combined arms operation." Failure to achieve an EFST may require the commander to alter his tactical or operational plan. A fully developed EFST has a task, purpose, method and effects. At task force (TF) level and below, you are merely an executor of the brigade commander's directed EFSTs. This is no different than if you were told to be the find and fix mechanism in a brigade movement to contact while another task force would be the destroy/defeat mechanism. It is not an option. The FSCOORD / BDE FSO must clearly articulate the EFST(s) to you and the rest of your staff during mission analysis in terms of task, purpose, method, and effects (this begins the integration of fires). You must also understand how the EFST supports or is nested into your own scheme of maneuver as well as the brigade's. If at BN TF level you disagree or believe that you need FA fires or CAS to accomplish your mission, then you must go back to the brigade commander and convince him. This must be done early on in the planning process. If you wait until the combined arms rehearsal you will most likely further de-synchronize the plan. Typically, the

commander tells his FSO to "get it fixed". The FSO can try, but will likely fail in getting additional brigade controlled assets. If you are a brigade commander, consider developing an EFST playbook that addresses the most likely EFSTs for a particular mission. You and the FSCOORD should develop this playbook to ensure that the FA battalion can in fact accomplish all the tasks identified given their level of training. As a TF commander, you should develop the same thing for your mortar platoon, or sections if in a division cavalry squadron. Along with the above mentioned FM, there is an excellent discussion on EFSTs in the *CTC Quarterly Bulletin 96-4, 2d Quarter, FY96, MAR 94*. It is still relevant today. This article, entitled "Indirect Fires and the Combined Arms Team," is a must read by all maneuver leaders!

A fully developed EFST, per *FM 3-09.31*, lists a specific task, purpose, method, and effects. The **task** describes what targeting objective (delay, disrupt, limit, or destroy) that fires must achieve on an enemy formation's function or capability. The **purpose** describes why/how the task contributes to maneuver. The **method** describes how the task will be accomplished by assigning responsibility to observers, to include brigade reconnaissance troop (BRT) elements, COLTs, scouts, maneuver shooters and delivery assets and also by providing amplifying information or restrictions. **Effects** quantify successful accomplishment of the task.

OBSERVER PLANS: Perhaps the most challenging thing for maneuver commanders at all levels to come to terms with is the observer plan that must be developed in order to ensure that the target is resourced at the right time to support the scheme of maneuver. Additionally, the targets and observers should also be depicted in tasks to subordinate units so that it is further highlighted in the order/FRAGO and responsibility is further fixed on the subordinate maneuver commander. Too often, the only level of detail that is ever planned, briefed or rehearsed is, "Scouts are the primary observer and 'X' company is the alternate for target #AH2001". Observer plans must be planned in detail during the MDMP (see diagram 1). The best technique is a combined observer plan and target overlay that shows routes, numbered observer locations, and targets. Written along the bottom of the overlay are the emplacement criteria, the specific observers at each location, the FS events or targets they are responsible for, and the displacement criteria. Some will argue that this is too centralized. It is unreasonable to think that our doctrine is top-down fire planning and then allow the resources to properly execute that plan in a decentralized manner. Additionally, who better than the commander and his battle staff should coordinate this critical aspect of the plan? Simply using the S2's situational template (SITTEMP) and route overlays of enemy reconnaissance avoids poor placement of observation posts (OPs) that directly conflict with these routes- which is often what happens when a company commander and FSO plan these locations on their own. Additionally, the use of Terra-Base products, or 1:25,000 over flight maps that BDE/BN TF level engineers typically have, can help to better identify covered and concealed routes and OPs with the best line of sight to the target area. Consider the routes and OP locations like they are targets. They can be refined during planning or execution by the Co FSO/Co CDR, but must still achieve the same task and purpose. Refinement during planning must be received at the TOC no later than two hours prior to the BDE/TF CAR.

KNOW THE ENEMY AND THE TERRAIN…USE IT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE – HE WILL! Units typically talk and plan in terms of doctrinal enemy formations, sometimes to the level of detail of actual numbers and vehicle types in those formations. This is sufficient for initial planning, but at some point the FSO, engineer, and S2 need to determine the details of how the enemy will enter the battle space, at what rate of speed (it will not be the constant 20 KPH that is always briefed), and how he will use the terrain to his advantage- or at times to his disadvantage. Analysis should include:

- Determining the type of enemy and the doctrinal formations he will attack you in.
- Determining the actual routes he will use given his most likely course of action (COA).
- Analyzing the terrain in detail. A few considerations:

- Do numerous intervisibility (IV) lines break it? If so, what directions do they run and how will the enemy use it to his advantage?
- Are there chokepoints and/or defiles?
- Are there roads or tank trails?
- Are there areas the enemy would determine as high risk? If so, how would he mitigate the risk? (by using smoke, avoiding the route, conducting robust counter-reconnaissance, etc.)
- Place on the map the enemy's probable line of contact (PLC) as you think he would determine it.

When you start analyzing the above considerations, certain things will become evident given the enemy and terrain in the following hypothetical example of an OPFOR attack:

You may find that the enemy will travel in column formation from his line of departure (LD) until his PLC, along roads/tank trails, at a speed of 20-25 KPH. Then, in the north, he will remain in column through canalized and hilly terrain from phase line "X" to phase line "Y" but his speed will be slowed to 15 KPH. In the south, between the same two phase lines, he will use the rolling terrain and go into column formation with approximately 3-6 vehicles per formation. He will use the traveling movement technique in the low ground that runs in the direction of his advance created by the numerous IV lines until he reaches the PLC where he will transition to traveling overwatch.

Using these tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), you can better begin to target the enemy. We no longer would put targets in the middle of our engagement areas, where he will not go, but instead, perhaps place linear targets in the low ground; or we may attempt to surprise him by targeting on roads as he travels in column at a point prior to his PLC. What we typically see at CMTC is target placement in areas that can be easily observed and trigger plans that allow for a constant 20 KPH rate of movement regardless of terrain. Units must improve at knowing the enemy and visualizing his use of terrain if we hope to better place targets and observers in order to achieve the effects stated in the commander's EFST.

SCHEME OF FIRES: This is defined by *FM 3-09.31* as the detailed, logical sequence of targets and fire support events to engage the enemy in time and space. It should mirror the scheme of maneuver. Units rarely use a scheme of fires or use it in the level of detail necessary to make it a worthwhile product. The scheme of fires is developed initially during the course of action (COA) development and refined during the wargaming process. The BDE/TF FSO should be filling it out throughout the process (see page A-4 in *FM 3–09.31*). It serves as an on-the-spot checklist and reality check all in one. By being disciplined and thinking through how to accomplish and resource each task, the unit must focus on and prioritize what it will and will not do with fires above and beyond EFSTs (which must appear in the scheme of fires). Instead, units tend to place targets on an overlay without any real critical thought as to how the targets will be executed. Ultimately, they end up with too many targets, little or no focus, and unresourced events/targets. Had they used the scheme of fires during planning, they would have quickly realized this by ensuring that they had addressed the execution of fires in enough detail to develop a plan that might work. Additionally, at the time of the OPORD briefing, the scheme of fires is a 90% solution with the only remaining refinements being the observer call signs, refined observer location, and refined target locations from subordinate CDRs/FSOs. These refinements should be received by the fire support element (FSE) and incorporated into the final plan prior to the CAR. The scheme of fires is not only important to you as a necessary planning and execution tool, but it is also important to the field artillery (FA) battalion that is supporting the brigade. The scheme of fires drives much of the planning and execution factors within the FA battalion (See diagram 2). These factors may adversely affect the maneuver plan if not properly planned and executed.

BATTLE CALCULUS: Simply put, know the limitation and capabilities of the FA battalion and your FSE, and more importantly, the relevance of those calculations to your unit. Provided (see diagram 3), is one example of the type of information you, your FSO and battle staff must understand. It provides a realistic vision of what a FA (155mm) battalion can accomplish.

What the figure shows is that in the fire for effect (FFE) mode, it takes approximately 28 minutes for the FA battalion (whose shift time is 7 minutes) to kill a platoon using the proper volume of fire. Additionally, you must understand that among the prerequisites to ensure this could occur is that an observer can accurately identify each vehicle and must provide accurate 6-8 digit grids to each. Those are some difficult conditions that need to be met and resourced. Too often during the planning process, maneuver commanders give unrealistic guidance to their staff and/or FSO. Here is an example: "… I want fires to destroy the platoon at the point of penetration…" Perhaps it is not so much unrealistic, but the commander, and at times his FSO, does not always understand the resources, not the least of which is time, that it takes to destroy the platoon. Additionally, during the 28 minutes that you are attempting to destroy the platoon at the point of penetration what are your subordinate maneuver units doing at that time? The other considerations are the enemy's actions, and whatever else you might expect indirect fires to be doing in support of the assault on the objective. Some of the problems with fires not being synchronized with the maneuver plan can be directly related to a lack of understanding by maneuver as well as fire support leaders when it comes to capabilities and limitations of the assets that the field artillery (mortars, CAS, etc.) bring to the fight. Additionally, the FSCOORD/FSO or Battalion Fire Direction Officer (FDO) can brief you on other means of engagement and time standards associated with them. Examples are group targets, open, closed, and special sheafs, etc.

INCORPORATION OF MORTARS: Mortars are the TF CDR's own indirect fire support asset, equating to four 120mm mortar tubes in heavy units. Unfortunately, they are one of the most underutilized combat multipliers within the TF. The most prevalent reasons for this are:

- Poor understanding of capabilities and limitations.
- No ownership by anyone else in the TF other than the mortar platoon leader (MORT PL) himself.
- No standard tactical mission assigned. Often only a priority of fire that shifts too many times during the fight with no clearly defined or rehearsed triggers as to when that priority shifts – result: no focus of fires.
- No essential tasks directed to mortars.
- Too many assigned tasks do not allow for unit movement, resupply, and friction.
- Poor visibility at TF level of maintenance, communications, and class V (to include resupply vehicles) during the planning, preparation, or execution phases.
- Poor or no support from the FA battalion with survey and meteorology (MET) to ensure accurate predicted fires.

Okay, so there are the issues. How do we potentially fix or mitigate some of these in order to get the mortars into the fight at the right place and time? Understand the capabilities and limitations of your mortar platoon:

- Rates of fire, ammo capacity on the tracks and resupply vehicles.
- MTP standards for emplacement and displacement in mounted and dismounted modes.
- The training level of the mortar platoon overlaid with the aforementioned data.

Often we see units with unrealistic expectations. As a result, the mortar platoon is over tasked. You must do the same battle calculus with the mortars that was addressed with the FA battalion. The MORT PL must be a part of the MDMP process. This ensures visibility of the mortar platoon and its status. Too often, potential issues are raised then wished away until they become undeniable problems during the CAR, or worse yet, during execution. Our recommendation is to direct no more than two essential tasks for the average mortar platoon. This allows the platoon leader to focus on quality

mounted rehearsals, effective management of class V, and flexibility for the inevitable friction on the battlefield. Thus, the platoon can still accomplish these tasks to standard, thereby impacting on the fight in a positive manner.

The MORT PL should be part of the back brief to the commander after the OPORD brief to ensure he understands essential mortar task(s) and the scheme of maneuver to support those tasks. Although there is no doctrinal definition for an essential mortar task (EMT), I offer the following: Just like an EFST, the EMT has a task, purpose, method, and effects. Failure to achieve an EMT may require the commander to alter his tactical plan. Development of potential EMTs by mission type is something that should be part of the SOP. Additionally, as part of your SOP, the MORT PL should give the S-3/XO a more specific brief prior to the OPORD briefing as well as some required preparation for combat reports to ensure the mortar platoon is progressing and ready for combat. The XO/S3 should have oversight of the MORT PL. By placing a field grade officer as the oversight agent for the mortar platoon, it relieves the MORT PL of a lot of the staff coordination burden (i.e. getting class V delivered, non mission capable parts delivered, etc.) and allows him to focus on troop leading procedures (TLPs). During the execution phase, the MORT PL should report to the S3 (on TF CMD freq) his combat power, location, and the essential task he is executing or preparing to execute. The S3's vehicle should have the mortar internal frequency loaded on his radio. This way the mortar platoon is not forgotten and inevitably left out of range, unsynchronized with the rest of the TF, or unable to support at the proper time and place. In this same vein, the FSO, as the TF commander's representative for fires, should brief the S3 and MORT PL prior to the OPORD on how he has coordinated with the FA battalion for survey and MET support for the mortars. If the plan is not coordinated by that time, it will probably not be coordinated by LD time.

Another reason the mortar platoon is often over tasked or loses focus is because units fail to assign support relationships for mortars. When support relationships are clear, then the standard tactical missions and inherent responsibilities are also clear. Instead, units merely address the priority of fires and nothing more. Become familiar with *FM 7-90, Tactical Employment of Mortars,* specifically, paragraph 3-2 and table 3-1. Go so far as to copy table 3-1 and put it in your smart book – refer to it during MDMP.

Use of Artillery Delivered FASCAM: This discussion is clearly directed to the brigade commanders. If war is a thinking man's sport, then FASCAM is a thinking man's munition. Often, units try to time the employment of FASCAM in order to separate the enemy forward security element from the advance guard main body, or some similar use. Some other considerations:

- Fire short duration FASCAM early in the deliberate attack (DATK) on the templated motorized rifle platoon (MRP) furthest from the point of penetration in a 200 x 800, medium density, area denial artillery munition/remote anti-armor mine system (ADAM/RAAMS) configuration with the attitude along the general orientation of the vehicles as you suspect them to be on the ground. This requires the S2 and TF engineer to template down to individual vehicle positions looking at Terra-Base and other products to assist them. Perhaps you are able to confirm actual fighting positions with scouts or the BRT. Shoot the FASCAM so that it is complete well prior to your first EFST after LD. Employing it in this fashion likely do one of several things to the enemy (or a combination of things). It should deny the enemy fighting positions making him less survivable; it should cause him to decide whether to fight above ground or to use his engineers to clear paths to fighting positions; it should limit or deny routes from hides to fighting positions or alternate positions; it should deny favorable terrain to the enemy; and it should potentially cause him to attempt to enter fighting positions earlier to allow for a bypass of the FASCAM obstacle. Even if you are successful with achieving just one of these effects, you have already caused him to start to fight on your terms and

you have not tied up the guns at another critical point of the battle, i.e., suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, assault (SOSR-A).

- Fire short duration FASCAM on preparation days of a DATK on templated obstacles of OPFOR. Again, the S2 and TF engineer have to conduct a detailed analysis of when and where the enemy is likely to place obstacles and dig MRP fighting positions. Putting FASCAM at these locations potentially catches enemy engineers working in or near these areas and effectively stops, delays, or limits his ability to work- thereby reducing the enemy's robust obstacle plan. Additionally, you may choose to place it on the templated MRP where you intend to penetrate, which again may limit his ability to prepare those vehicles fighting positions to standard. Either way, if successful, you have once again affected his decision cycles and scheme of maneuver.
- Fire FASCAM along templated most likely dismounted and mounted recon routes and coinciding with their expected entrance times into sector. Again, the S2s level of detail must increase, but the potential payoff is huge. More planning on the FA side is required, since in this case we would likely shoot unconventional dimensions and compositions of FASCAM. Use RAAMS only along mounted routes and ADAM only along dismounted routes. The size of these obstacles would be more like 50 x 50, 100 x 100, 100 x 50, 200 x 100, etc. At best, the division tracked and regimental reconnaissance elements may also have engineer reconnaissance patrols with them or nearby; but otherwise, minefields placed at the proper places and the proper times can kill, delay, or disrupt an unsuspecting enemy and significantly limit his ability to get early reads on your dispositions. Couple this, perhaps, with some effective use of illumination along these same routes linked to times the S2 has said the enemy will enter sector, and we have potentially further limited his recon effort. Imagine the conversations on the enemy's radio nets during the night as they start to encounter an enemy who is thinking! You have potentially caused blind spots that he now must "reseed", divert other assets to, or accept risk with. Either way, you have entered his decision cycle and brought the fight to him.

Granted, there is some risk associated with the employment of FASCAM and illumination when used as suggested above. I simply offer some TTPs; acceptance of various levels of risk will always remain the commander's business. Have the FSCOORD/FSO or FA BN FDO explain in detail the technical intricacies of proper employment and ensure that the engineer is included in this meeting as well.

Fire Support Rehearsals: Suffice it to say that if you do not rehearse well, you will not execute well. An excellent article that specifically addresses the fire support rehearsal is contained in *CALL Newsletter 97-11*, APR 97, *Fighting With Fires III,* entitled "The Fire Support Rehearsal" (p.40). Since fires are BDE assets, the BCT commander should participate in this rehearsal. It is recommended that the BCT CDR/S3 and TF CDRs/S3s listen in on this rehearsal with their FSOs at their side in order to confirm the communications structure, ensure the observers are set on their essential targets, and that they can observe their triggers and target areas. I reiterate a couple of key points: First, it is best if this rehearsal is done by FM radio, just as it will be executed. By doing so, you confirm your communications structure with all key participants. Secondly, whoever is listed as an alternate or primary observer must be monitoring the net at the time of the rehearsal. If your FSO does not talk to them FM prior to LD, he most definitely will not *after* LD either. You can assist in this endeavor by ensuring that **your** fire support rehearsal is on the BCT, TF and CO timelines and deconflicted with subordinate rehearsals, road marches, etc. Getting **all** observers (scouts and maneuver shooters seem to be the biggest violators of this) to participate seems to be the biggest challenge for the FSO. It bears greater mention when I say observers; I mean the actual private,

sergeant, lieutenant, whomever, with his own radio up on the net and participating. No other standard is acceptable! Be ruthless, commander, and support this! Anything else on this topic is more than adequately addressed in the aforementioned article. Take the time to read. Make your FSO do the same.

It is my hope, commander, that next time you will be more effective with indirect fires. This article was designed simply to offer some ideas in which you can examine yourself and your unit so as to assess how well it is that you are getting fires into the fight to support you! If I have done nothing but stimulate some thought and discussion within your unit and among fire supporters who work with you, then I have been successful. You, on the other hand, have still got to make it work – good luck!

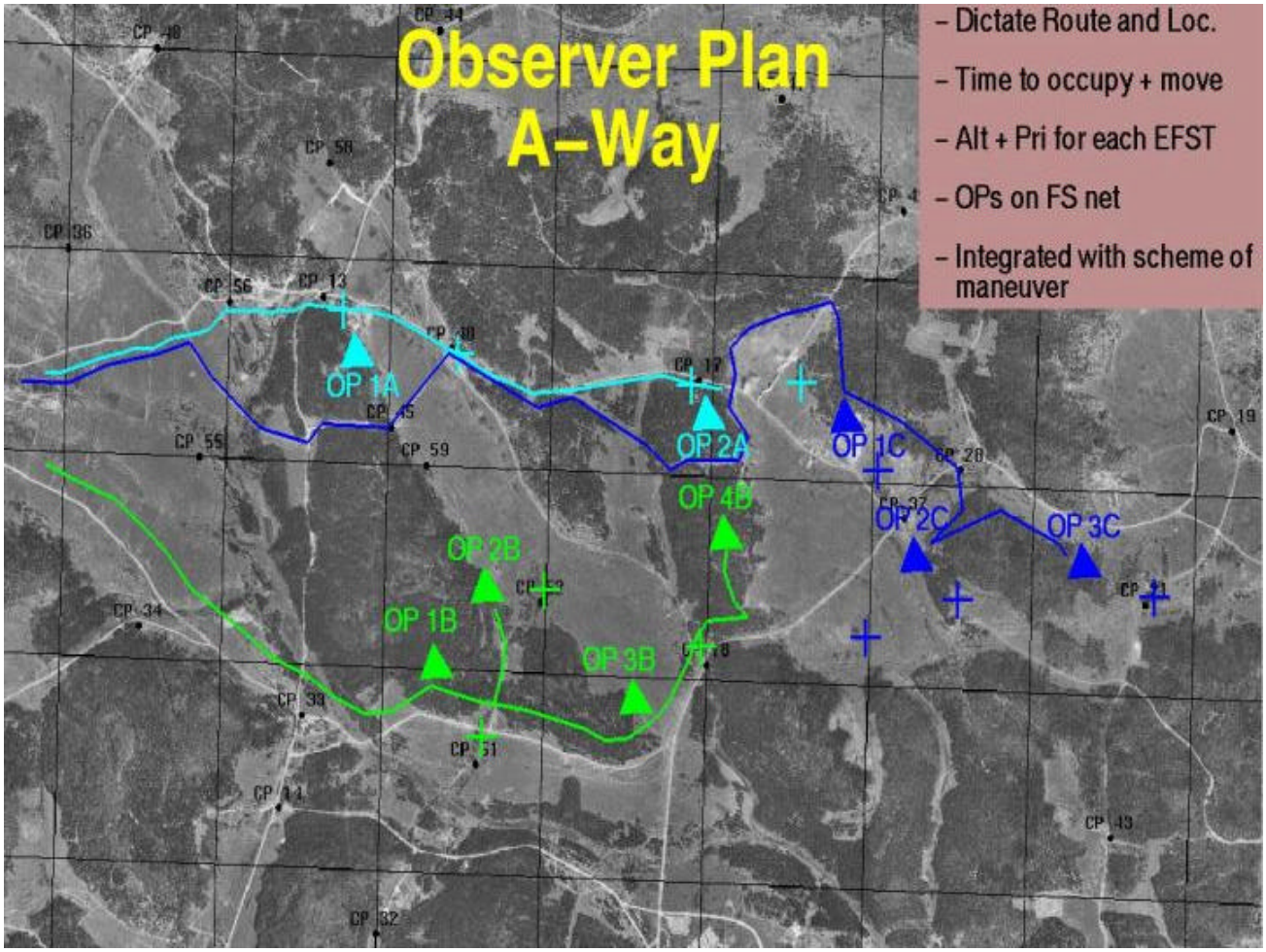


Diagram 1

Scheme of Fires Drives:

FIRE UNIT ASSIGNMENT	*FORCE PROTECTION*	*SPECIAL MSNs / MUNITIONS*	*C^2*
POSITIONING (Range)	Q36 PROTECTION	SEAD (TIME HACK)	RETRANS PLAN
AMMO DISTRIBUTION	Q36 MOVEMENT TRIGGERS	CPRHD (OBSVR PSN)	MSU / JUMP TOC
AMMO RESUPPLY TRIGGERS	ZONE ACTIVATION	SMOKE (BUILD / DURATION)	FSCM
BATTERY MOVEMENT TRIGGERS	CF SHOOTER DESIGNATION	FASCAM (MULTIPLE AIM POINTS	POF / TRIGGERS
MET SCHEDULE	COORD w/ DIVARTY	RAP (HE ONLY) HIGH VOLUME	HASTY vs DELIBERATE
SURVEY PLAN		RED BAG (QUANTITIES)	OBSERVATION PLAN
TECH REHEARSAL		ILLUM	R&S PLAN
BATTERY REHEARSAL		OUT OF TRAVERSE	
BATTERY AZ OF FIRE		HIGH ANGLE	

REF: White Paper and FM3-09.31

Diagram 2

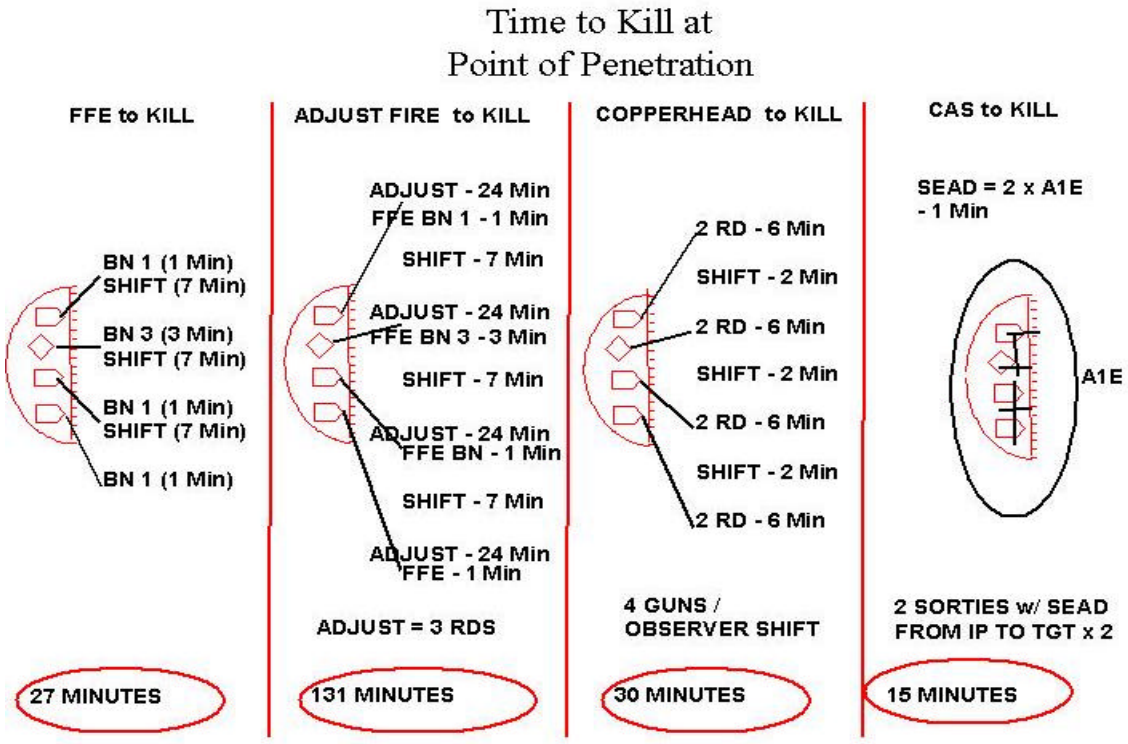


Diagram 3

THE TASK FORCE TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER
Thoughts on Preparation for Combat
(Part Two)

By MAJ Michael S. Higginbottom
CMTC O/C, Timberwolf 03

Having discussed some systemic negative trends noted in task force (TF) tactical operations centers (TOCs) in *Part One*, this article offers some concrete solutions or examples to help unit leaders get their command post (CP) organized. This article is focused on the non-digital-equipped TF TOC; however, some of the observations and techniques may apply to digital-equipped units as well.

Observations at the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) indicate that many units do not have TOC layouts that support the different phases or cycles of a mission, i.e., plan, prepare, execute, and reconstitute. During a recent rotation, one TF TOC remained in the same configuration for the entire fourteen days. Units that only have one standard layout for all enemy and friendly situations tend to have difficulty in displacing the command post prior to and during the execution phase. Likewise, these units can experience difficulty during planning and preparation phases due to lack of sufficient workspace to develop their plans and to properly track critical information for the commander. Typically, a TF TOC may have three basic layouts or configurations, commonly referred to as a green, amber or red TOC. Regardless of configuration, the functions of the TOC and the responsibilities of the staff to the commander remain the same:

- Receive and process information
- Distribute information
- Analyze information
- Submit recommendations to the commander
- Integrate resources
- Synchronize resources

In a green configuration, the TOC typically conducts planning, briefings, and mission preparation. Enemy contact is possible but unlikely. Figure 1 illustrates a technique for TFs to employ during a green configuration.

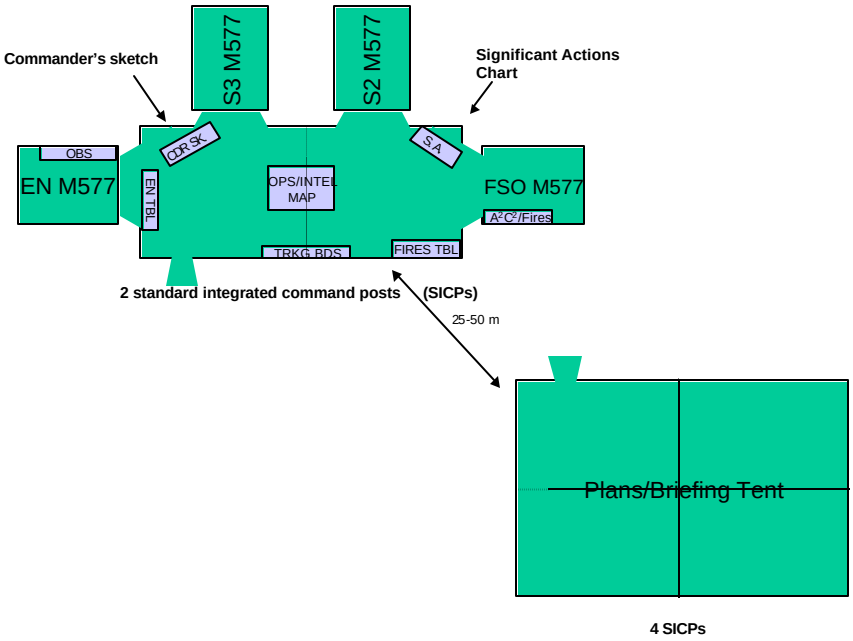


Fig. 1, Example of a Green CP Layout

In an amber configuration, the TOC typically finalizes mission preparation, tracks critical mission preparation tasks for the commander, and prepares for itself for mission execution. Enemy contact is likely. Figure 2 illustrates a technique for TFs to employ during an amber configuration.

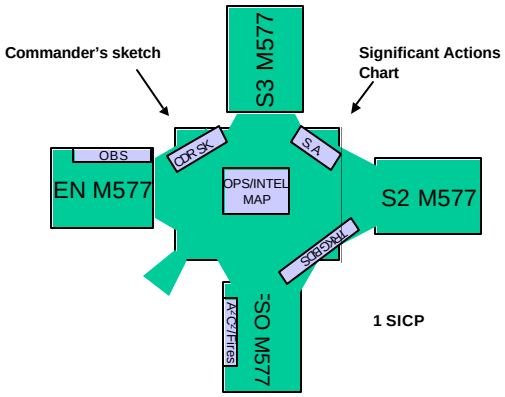


Fig. 2, Example of Amber CP Layout

In a red configuration, the TOC is typically executing a mission. Enemy contact is likely or imminent. TOC may have to execute several displacements if the TF conducts a lengthy movement. Figure 3 illustrates a technique for TFs to employ during a red configuration.

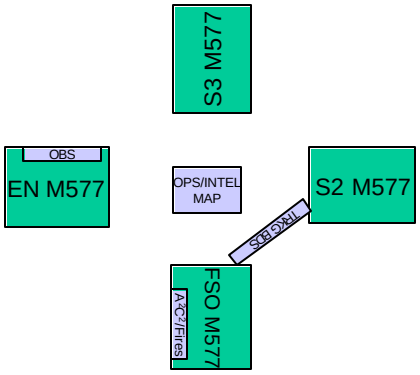


Fig. 3, Example of Red CP Layout

During mission execution, the TF TOC must fight the engagement/battle as a coordinated staff, integrating and synchronizing resources for the commander while making recommendations to the commander/S3 who are forward. Figure 4 illustrates a technique for key personnel placement within the TOC to facilitate TF staff synchronization and fusion.

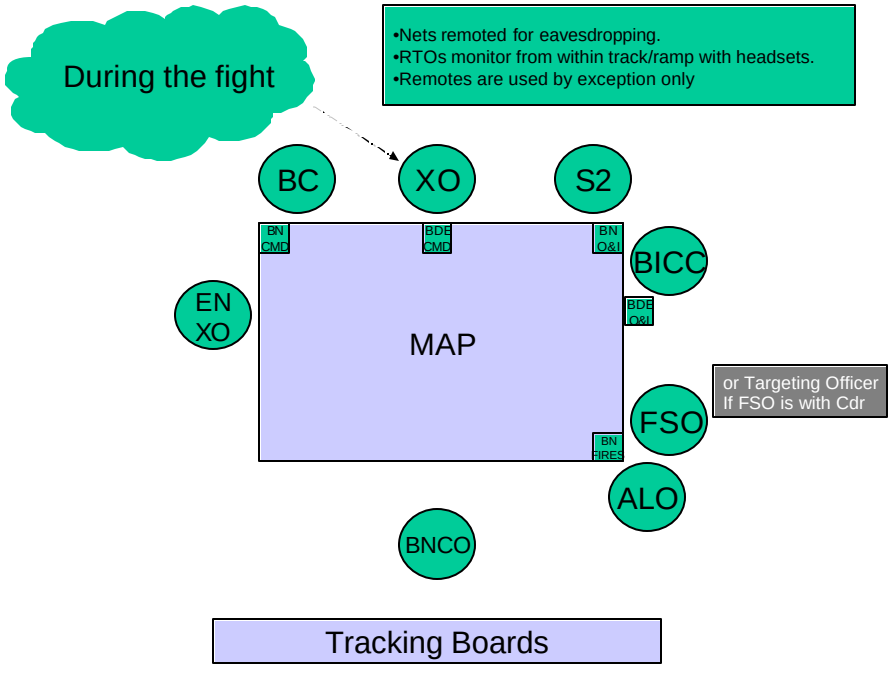


Fig. 4, Battle Tracking

We recommend the TF battle staff track and fight the battle from the same map board in order to more effectively integrate and synchronize resources. Here in figure 5 are some ideas to assist the staff:

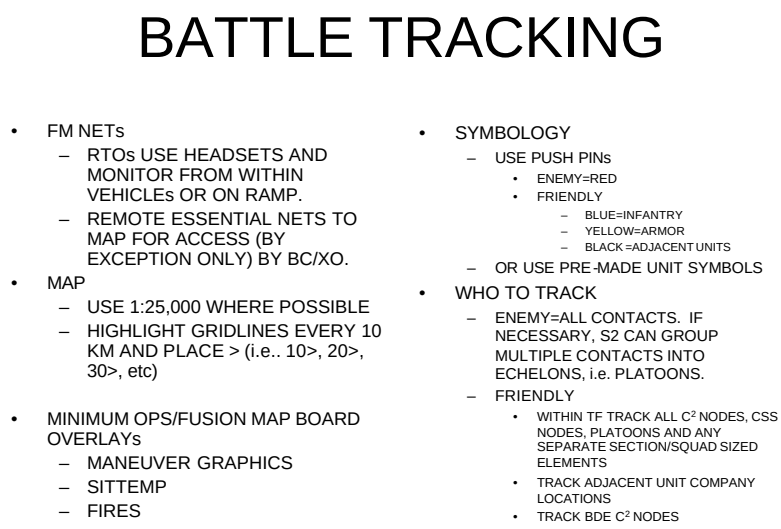


Fig. 5, Battle Tracking Ideas

Often, units do not have a system for information display that supports the commander and aids the executive officer in synchronizing the fight. Units often attempt to display too much information, or conversely, fail to display critical information that must be readily accessible. Just as important, information displays (tracking boards) need to be functional for the soldiers that must update and use them. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate examples of what type of information should be posted within a TF TOC and also demonstrate a technique for tracking combat power. In addition to these figures, we recommend that TF S2s use a similar chart to Figure 7 for enemy battle damage assessment, i.e., kill charts. We also recommend that for reference, the battle captain (BC) maintain a readily accessible orders book or folder for each mission that contains all brigade and TF orders and fragmentary orders.

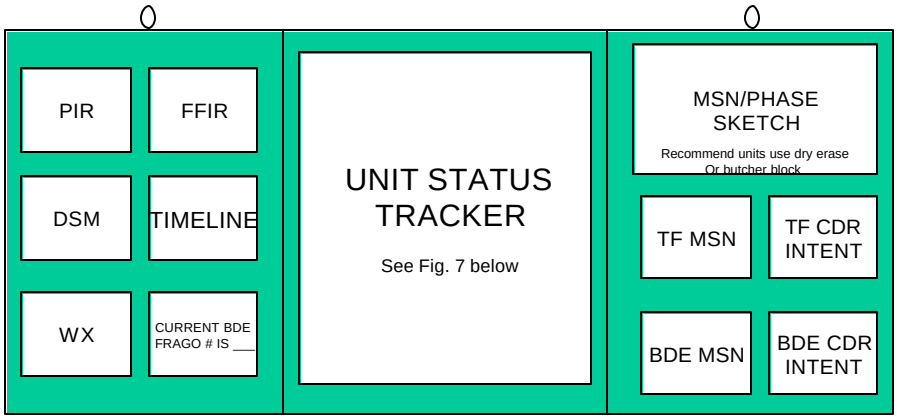


Fig. 6, Example of a TF Information Display Board

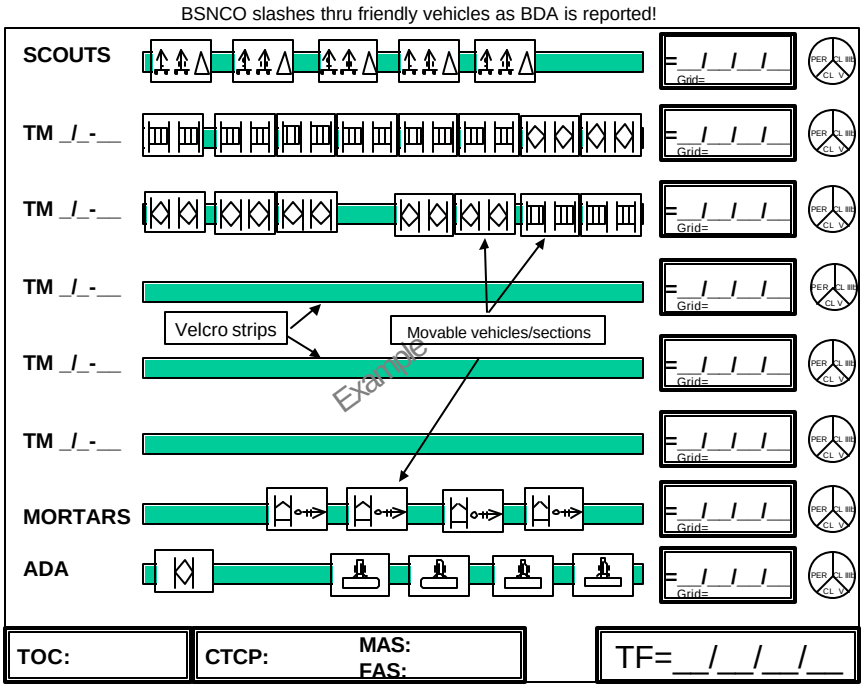


Fig. 7, Technique to Track TF Unit Status

During a typical twelve-hour staff shift, many activities, events, and actions will transpire within a TF TOC. Many of these actions involve forwarding or receiving routine reports; some may require action on the part of the staff members on shift; while some may be related to events or information that the commander has determined to be important for the current or upcoming mission. Generally, staff sections keep track of all information and activities that occur on their shift by using a DA 1594R, Daily Staff Journal. These journals can be effective information management tools, but they are generally maintained in a compartmentalized fashion, with each section maintaining

their own journal. This makes them less conducive to cross-BOS actions, hindering later follow-up, and also difficult to make readily available to the commander or executive officer when they arrive for a TOC update. While units should continue to maintain appropriate staff journals within each section, the battle captain should use a significant actions chart as a more functional tool to track important activities for the commander. (See figure 8)

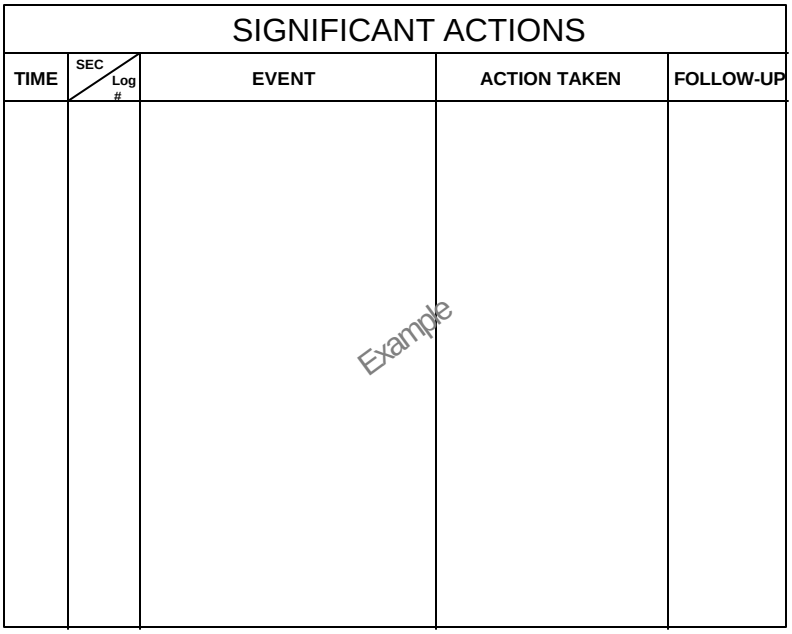


Fig. 8, TF Significant Actions Chart

With this chart, the battle captain can quickly provide a battle update brief to the commander or other TOC visitors. It can also be used to brief oncoming shifts during the shift change brief. By listing the originating staff section and journal entry number, the battle captain can easily cross reference the chart to more detailed information located in the section log and/or spot report log.

As previously mentioned, each TF staff section should continue to maintain a daily staff journal. O/C observations at CMTC note that these journals are not kept up to date, not properly closed out, and not maintained on file. Figure 9 lists some ideas for maintaining these staff journals.

STAFF JOURNALs

- EACH SECTION MAINTAINS FOR 24-HOUR PERIODS.
- SECTION NCOIC MAINTAINS THE JOURNAL ON DA FORM 1594R, WITH ITS ASSOCIATED SPOT REPORTS IN AN ATTACHED FOLDER.
  1. SECTION NCOs CLOSE OUT THEIR JOURNALS AND GIVE THEM TO THE OPS SGM FOR REVIEW.
  2. OPS SGM ENSURES ALL JOURNALS HAVE BEEN PROPERLY FILLED OUT AND CLOSED.
  3. CONSIDER HAVING THE BATTLE CAPTAIN OR S2 REVIEW ALL JOURNALS FOR PREVIOUSLY UNDETECTED CCIR-RELATED REPORTS
  4. ASST OPS NCO FILES ALL SECTION JOURNALS FOR LATER REFERENCE OR FORWARDING TO DA.

Fig. 9, Daily Staff Journals

TF TOC radiotelephone operators (RTOs) often record incoming spot reports from subordinate elements on blank paper, scrap paper, or on the daily staff journal. Some units utilize 5-ply record books, although RTOs must then format them with the acronym “SALUTE” in order to ensure all relevant information is recorded. Other units utilize one-ply paper with a section at the bottom of the page for each staff section’s initials. The problem with this system is that the single copy of the report must work its way through the TOC distribution system, pausing several times while each section’s RTO or NCO recopies any pertinent data on the report onto their journal so that the report can return to the originating section. During mission execution, one-ply reports are never adequately distributed throughout the TOC and tend to pile up, causing critical information to lay idle. Some ideas on handling spot reports are listed in figure 10.

SPOT REPORTS

- USE 5-PLY PRE-FORMATTED REPORTS WITH ASSIGNED COLORS OR COPY NUMBERS FOR EACH SECTION (S2, S3, FSO, EN, OTHER (PSYOP, ADA, SJA, CA, etc)
- RECOMMEND THAT A UNIT DESIGNS A FORMAT AND REPRODUCES IT THROUGH LOCAL PRINT PLANT/LOCAL PURCHASE.
- SPOT REPORT FLOW:
  1. RTOs ENSURE THAT ALL REQUIRED INFO IS RECORDED
  2. RTOs HAND OVER COMPLETED REPORTS TO SECTION NCOs WHO SCREEN FOR ACCURACY/COMPLETENESS
  3. SECTION NCOs HAND OVER REPORTS TO BC AND THEN TO OTHER TOC SECTIONS AS DIRECTED BY BC.
  4. SECTION NCOs RECORD REPORTS RECEIVED IN SECTION JOURNALS AND THE SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS BOARD IF APPROPRIATE.
  5. BC DIRECTS STAFF SECTIONS AND/OR TF SUBORDINATE UNITS TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS
- IF UNABLE TO RECORD IN JOURNAL DUE TO INCOMING REPORTS, NCOs *FOCUS ON UPDATING TRACKING BOARDS/MAP*; SPOT REPORTS ARE STUCK ON NAILS OR PLACED IN FOLDERS FOR LATER USE IN UPDATING JOURNALS.

Fig. 10, Recording Spot Reports

Additionally, RTOs often record routine friendly updates or reports on blank paper, scrap paper, or on pre-printed spot reports. After the RTO receives this information, the report is handed off to someone else (preferably, the battle NCO, and not the battle captain!) for posting to the unit tracking charts and map. However, pre-printed spot reports are enemy-focused, and therefore inappropriate for recording friendly information. Scrap paper or blank note pads do not work since they tend to litter the operations area and fail to provide mnemonic tools for RTOs to ensure that all relevant information is recorded. Even within the same TOC, different sections may be using different mechanisms and procedures to record such information. Figure 11 addresses some ideas on handling routine reports such as combat power/unit locations:

ROUTINE REPORTS

•DO NOT ALLOW YELLOW STICKY PADS TO BE USED TO RECORD INFORMATION
•HAVE A REPORT FORMAT FOR RTOs TO RECORD ROUTINE FRIENDLY UNIT INFORMATION
•ENSURE ALL STAFF SECTIONS HAVE ENOUGH COPIES AND UTILIZE THE SAME PRE-FORMATTED REPORTS. THIS WILL ALLOW THE BATTLE NCO TO RECEIVE CHANGES TO THE TRACKING BOARD IN A COMMON FORMAT.

UNIT	Sub-unit(s)	CBT POWER	LOCATION	REMARKS

Fig. 11, Receiving Routine Friendly Unit Updates

During mission planning and preparation, the commander, executive officer, or other members of the staff may develop questions regarding the current/upcoming mission. These questions are generally submitted to the next higher staff for resolution as a request for information (RFI). Despite the importance of these requests, TF staffs often have difficulty tracking their status after they are generated during the military decision making process. Consequently, the questions remain unanswered. Conversely, RFIs may get passed from a TF staff officer directly to the TF liaison officer or to the appropriate brigade staff section without TF executive officer or operations officer oversight. Refer to figure 12 for a sample technique for recording and tracking RFIs.

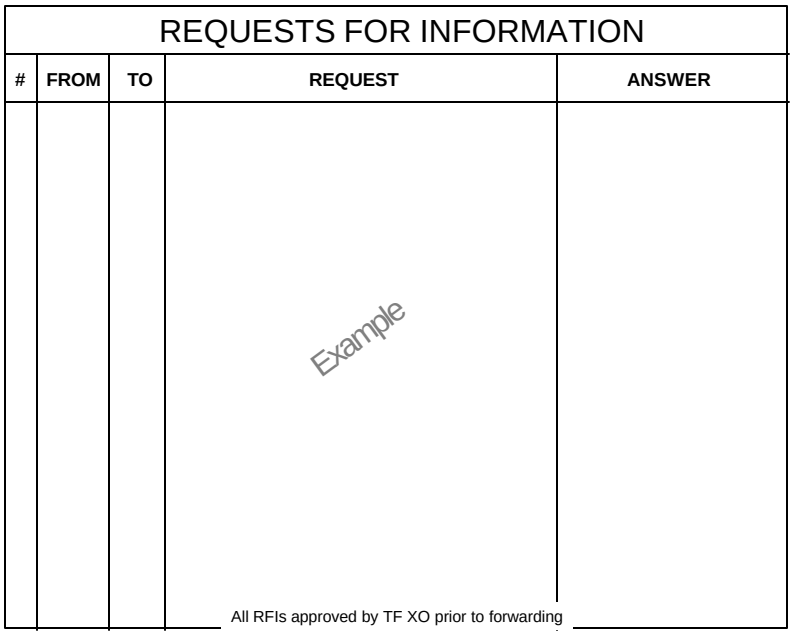


Fig. 12, TF Requests for Information Tracking Chart

During all phases of a mission, the TF commander must see himself, the enemy, and the terrain. During the preparation phase, the TF TOC is critical in supporting this requirement. As subordinate units begin to initiate reconnaissance taskings, conduct troop-leading procedures, and execute the commander's vision of the operation, the TOC must track all of these activities and associated reports. During this phase, the TF commander is focused on supervising the plan and checking/inspecting subordinate unit preparations. See "Command Leadership in Preparation for Combat" by LTC Cloy in the JAN-MAR 02 *News from the "Box"* edition for more on TF CDR actions during this phase. The TOC should be prepared at any time to provide the commander with a battle update brief on the status of mission preparation. Figures 13 and 14 are examples that the staff can prepare as their staff estimates are refined and reports are received from subordinate units, the brigade recon troop, the TF scout platoon, and engineer reconnaissance teams. The TOC can use these charts in offensive operations to visually track and portray the results of these activities for the commander.

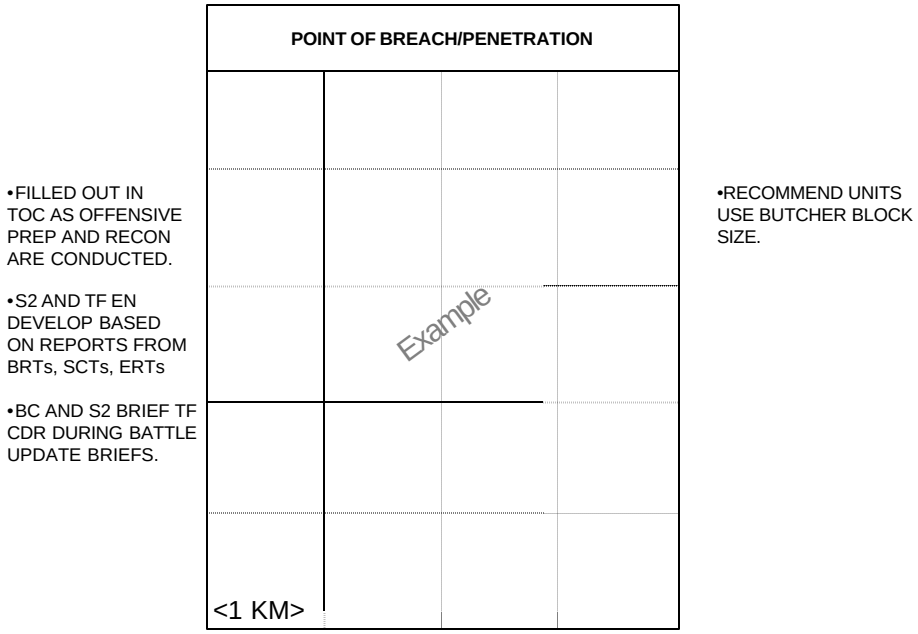


Fig. 13, TOC Deliberate Attack Commander's Sketch

OFFENSIVE BATTLE PREP STATUS

LINE	TASK	TIME COMPLETED
A	TF Order Complete	_____
B	Task ORG Complete	_____
C	CO Order	_____
D	CO Back Briefs	_____
E	PLT Orders	_____
F	CO Rehearsals	_____
G	PLT Rehearsals	_____
H	Weapons Boresighted	_____
I	Route Recon	_____
J	Class III Delivered	_____
K	Class V Delivered	_____
L	PCI Complete	_____
M	Adj. Unit Coordination	_____
N	Graphics Updated	_____

Fig. 14, TOC Offensive Prep Tracking Chart

Figures 15 and 16 are examples that the staff can prepare during defensive operations, as reports are received from subordinate units conducting engagement area development and the commander's priorities of work.

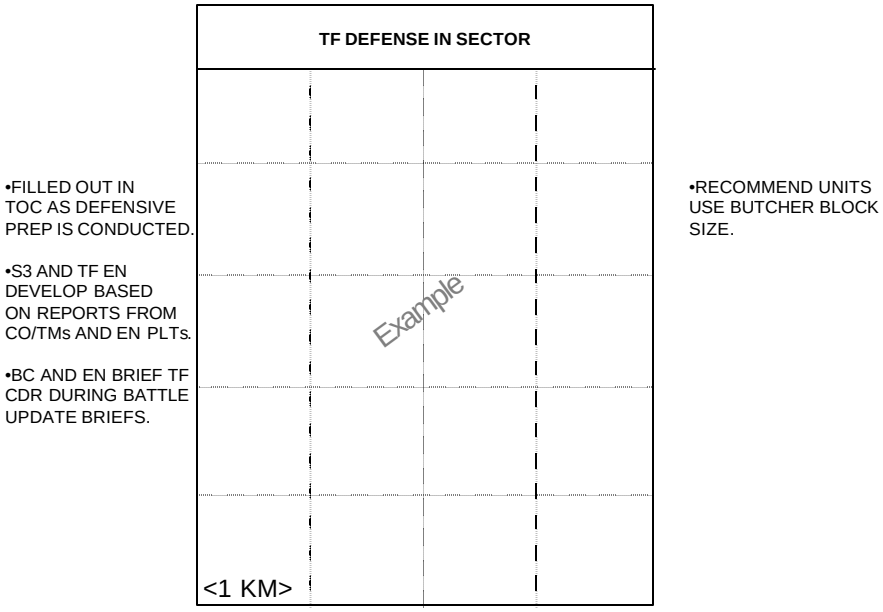


Fig. 15, TOC Defense in Sector Commander's Sketch

DEFENSIVE BATTLE PREP STATUS

LINE	TASK	TIME COMPLETED
A	TF Order Complete	
B	Task ORG Complete	
C	Class IV Delivered	
D	EA Recon	
E	BP Recon	
F	CO / Team Order	
G	CO / Team Order to TOC	
H	ALT BP Recon	
I	Graphics Updated	
J	PLT Orders	
K	PLT / CO Sector Sketch	
L	TRPs Marked (Thermal)	
M	Proof EA	
N	Dozer Hand Over	
O	Obstacles Complete	
P	Reposition Rehearsal	
Q	Class III Delivered	
R	Class V Delivered	
S	Weapons Boresighted	
T	BP Occupied	

Fig. 16, TOC Defensive Tracking Chart

Tactical operations centers are the nucleus and conduit through which the TF commander controls the actions of the TF. These command posts must be mobile, efficient, and highly trained. They cannot be an afterthought during BN/TF training and preparation for combat. The sample techniques offered in this article are intended to help units get better organized, or help provide a starting point for similar organizational ideas to improve command post operations.